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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editor is not responsible for opinions expressed in this department. All communications must be accompanied by the name and address of the writer.

INFORMATION WANTED FROM RURAL NURSES

DEAR EDITOR: I am very anxious to learn about school nursing in rural communities and am writing to ask if the JOURNAL could help me by asking nurses who are doing this work, or who know of any place where it is being done, to send me their names and addresses. I know that this work is being carried on in some rural districts but do not know just where or by whom. I shall be glad to defray any expense this may involve and shall greatly appreciate any assistance.

HELEN W. KELLY.

3658 Polk St., Chicago, Ill.

A UNIQUE METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

DEAR EDITOR: An item of general interest to the nursing profession is a work of investigation started by Aida E. Soderstrom of the class of 1910, Methodist Hospital, Brooklyn. Miss Soderstrom has been employed by the New York Department of Health as school nurse for two and one-half years and as a result of her affiliation with the Erasmus Hall High School, the following ideas were evolved and are now being carried out. She wrote a letter to Dr. William H. Maxwell, city superintendent of schools, requesting permission to have the following questions answered briefly by the 4 B grade girl students of one or more high schools.

(1) Would you like to become a nurse?

(2) (a) If you wish to become a nurse why do you so desire? (b) If you would not consider the choice of the profession of nursing for your life work, what are your reasons?

The letter was referred to Mr. Meleney, Associate City Superintendent of Schools, for consideration, and permission was granted. It will be interesting to follow up this work and see what results will be obtained.

E. K.

New York.

WORK OF A RESIDENT NURSE IN A COLLEGE

I

DEAR EDITOR: The inquiries of A. P. regarding the work of a college resident nurse, in the November JOURNAL, are well worth discussing, for we have no standard to which we may turn. I am glad to give my experience if it will be of any assistance.

While establishing preventive nursing in a college dormitory I found the keeping of office hours to be most beneficial. To make them of the greatest benefit, a real desire to be of service, upon the part of the nurse must be felt by the inmates. The nurse must make them realize that it is no trouble, but a pleasure, for her to talk over a disturbance of mind or body. By so doing she

may be able to guide the mind, the trend of thought, into healthy channels and check nervous tendencies. She may set straight careless habits of eating, of drinking, of sleeping, of elimination and gain the full confidence of each student. Through the opportunity thus afforded, "of going before disease" the beds in the hospital would be used for cases to be watched, rather than for illness. Gradually as confidence is established between the nurse and student, an opportunity for love and service will unfold, such as might have seemed impossible.

An hour before classes began in the morning, one at noon and one after the evening meal, seemed to fill the need in my work.

I had a written statement, signed by the college physician, authorizing me to give, as necessary, some of the simple medicinal remedies. You might be able to make some such an arrangement with a doctor recommended by the president or by whoever has charge of your department. If I can help in any way I will gladly do so by letter.

E. H.

Idaho.

II

DEAR EDITOR: This branch of nursing does not appeal to some nurses as they do not feel that the work is big enough. The past year here afforded work in scarlet fever, diphtheria, mumps, chicken-pox, pneumonia, jaundice, insomnia, tonsillitis, grippe, hysteria, indigestion, heart trouble, sprains, fractures, dislocations, burns, wounds, eye and ear infections. As there was considerable smallpox in the city, it necessitated the vaccination of many of the faculty, student body, and help; all care and dressings, to the number of about four hundred, being done by the nurse. As the nurse's work among the students is to teach them how to acquire and keep health as well as to care for them when ill, no little work falls upon her if she is alive to, and interested in, the situation.

The infirmary is situated upon the edge of a beautiful grove, a short distance from the main buildings, accessible and yet quiet. It is a two-story building, with two wards which each accommodate four or six beds, four private rooms, three bathrooms, two diet kitchens, closet, office and small adjoining medicine room, a large room for the nurse and one for the maid who does all the house work. The second floor is used for contagious cases and is so arranged as to conform to the laws of the state in caring for three different cases at the same time.

The regulations are as follows: the card system for the record of all attention given students is used, and at the beginning of the year, on each student's card are recorded the address, date of successful vaccination, names of physicians, dentists, oculists, other than those selected by the president of the college. The nurse makes record of each patient's malady, care given, visits of physician, medicines, visits to dentist, oculist, and physician. She checks all bills before sending them to the parents. She arranges for chaperonage to the office of physician, dentist, oculist, and makes all such appointments whenever necessary. She arranges for a medical examination for all matriculants, which is conducted at the Infirmary by the college physician. Re-examinations are given as often as the conditions demand. The physical examination is made twice a year by the physical director in the gymnasium. Notification of illness is sent to the parents by the student herself or by the nurse.

An infirmary fee of \$5 is paid for the year which entitles each student to general care in her room, office and one week's care in the infirmary. Those

remaining over one week pay \$1 per day. For medicines, bandages, etc., a nominal price is charged. Students requiring night care, or having contagious diseases have a special nurse who acts under the resident nurse, the latter relieving special nurses whenever possible. The student pays for the special nurse and her board.

The nurse or maid is always at the infirmary so that emergency cases can have prompt attention. The nurse leaves word where she can be located whenever she leaves the building.

Office hours at the infirmary, when the nurse may be seen for consultation, are 7.30 to 8.00 a.m. daily; Sunday, 8.30 to 9.00; 4.30 to 5.30 daily except Saturday and Sunday. Emergency calls are attended to at all hours. The visiting hour for the sick is 4.30 to 5.30.

During morning office hours, the chairman of the look-out committee in each residence hall reports those ill in their rooms. Immediately after 8 o'clock, the nurse calls upon them, arranges for their transfer to the infirmary and, if necessary, reports to the physician, or if the indisposition is slight, arranges for meals to be sent up and attends to the little care necessary. Special diets are handed in to the matron of the hall. Before the afternoon office hours the nurse again calls upon the student if in doubt as to her condition. All suspicious cases go to the infirmary at once and are quarantined. In case of contagion the nurse fumigates the student's room in the residence hall and of course the one in the infirmary receives the same treatment. A written notice of sickness on the door of the sick student forbids all entrance. Students needing the services of a chiropodist must see the nurse who makes all such appointments. Those under care of their family physician must report to the nurse and no student may ever administer medicines to another. All illness is reported verbally to the president, in writing to the dean, who then issues excuses from classes to the head of each hall and to the matron of each hall.

The general care of those ill follows office hours, the early morning care, temperatures, etc., is given before the nurse goes to breakfast, but students are expected to do for themselves as far as is advisable. The nurse has her meals at an adjoining hall where she presides at a table with nine students.

The nurse is considered one of the faculty and is expected to join in all social affairs so far as her duties will allow. Whenever the opportunity arises, and I sometimes make the opening, I talk of nursing service in its various branches, encouraging them to take up the training. In this way I hope to get desirable young women into our training schools.

The college has a department of Home Economics and the nurse has six classes of 45 or 50 pupils in three sections for practical demonstration in Home Nursing. These classes are held in the infirmary.

There are four residence halls accommodating 325 students, 50 members of the faculty, and 75 helpers, making a family of 400 people who are at liberty to call upon the nurse at any hour of the day or night. The nurse has few night calls and little occasion to lose sleep, surely an advantage in favor of college work. It is true in this branch of service as in all other work, one gets out of it just what one puts in.

H. J. F.

Wisconsin.